

## Nonconformity in Wales

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### What's a Nonconformist?

In 1662, the Act of Uniformity was passed requiring everyone to conform to the Church of England or the Anglican Church. Those who did not comply were called nonconformists.

### Overview of Nonconformity in Wales

- Quakers, Baptists, and Independents (Presbyterians) were the first nonconformist groups in Wales.
- In the beginning of the 1700s religious persecution eased and Wales nonconformist baptisms increased.
- By the 1800s Methodists grew rapidly in Wales. Among these were the Calvinistic Methodists and the Wesleyan Methodists.
- Between 1754-1837, nonconformists could not legally marry outside the Church of England, except for Quakers and Jews.
- In 1836, all nonconformist groups were asked to turn their registers over to the Registrar General. Not all complied.
- Nonconformity continued to increase during the 1800s and by 1851 about 75% of the Welsh population were nonconformists.

### Nonconformist Records

- Nonconformist records vary amongst denomination. Some may contain more information however than the Church of England records.
- Nonconformist records may contain a person's birth date, baptism date, father's name and residence, and mother's name, including maiden name.

### When to Search Nonconformity?

- When you can't find your ancestor in the Church of England records.
- Large gaps in years between siblings.
- Ancestor has a biblical name.
- Welsh ancestors in America were not Anglican.

## How to Find Wales Nonconformist Churches

A good website for finding what nonconformist churches exist in Wales is the FamilySearch Wiki. Go to [Wiki.FamilySearch.org](http://Wiki.FamilySearch.org) and in the search box type 'Wales Church Records.' Scroll down to the Nonconformist section. Click on the county where your ancestors came from to determine what nonconformist churches existed in the area where your ancestor lived. Here is an example:

### WALES, [COUNTY], [PARISH] - CHURCH HISTORY

From early times, denominational magazines were published. These contain invaluable references to members, including often lengthy notices of baptisms, marriages, and obituaries. See [Wales Periodicals](#) for more information on how to locate journals in the FamilySearch Catalog.

**For a list of details related to chapels in the pre-1974 counties, click the county you are researching in below.**

- [Anglesey Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Breconshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Caernarfonshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Cardiganshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Carmarthenshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Denbighshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Flintshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Glamorgan Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Merionethshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Monmouthshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Montgomeryshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Pembrokeshire Nonconformist Records](#)
- [Radnorshire Nonconformist Records](#)

## How to Access Wales Nonconformist Records

Many of the Wales nonconformist records are available online on various family history websites. If a website does not have the nonconformist denomination for your ancestor, try searching the Family History Library catalog on FamilySearch.org by using the Place or Keyword search and type the name of your ancestor's parish. If the record still cannot be found for the years needed, contact the local County Record Office in the county where your ancestor lived.

| <a href="http://www.familysearch.org">www.familysearch.org</a>  | <a href="http://www.findmypast.com">www.findmypast.com</a>  | <a href="http://www.ancestry.com">www.ancestry.com</a>   |
|---|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sign into your free account.</li><li>2. Go to Search, then Records.</li><li>3. Scroll down to Find a Collection, and in the Collection Title box type, 'England and Wales Non-conformist.' You will need to add the hyphen. You can also just type, 'Non.'</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sign into Findmypast.com.</li><li>2. Click Search.</li><li>3. Click "All record sets."</li><li>4. In the search box type, 'England &amp; Wales Non-Conformist,' or just 'Non.'</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sign into Ancestry.com.</li><li>2. Click Search, then Card Catalog.</li><li>3. In the Keyword(s) search type, "England and Wales Non-conformist." You will need to include the hyphen.</li><li>4. Click the England &amp; Wales, Non-conformist database.</li></ol> |

| FamilySearch Catalog  | TheGenealogist.co.uk  | County Record Office or Local chapel   |
|---|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to the Familysearch.org and sign in with your free account.</li> <li>2. Go to Search, then Catalog.</li> <li>3. In the Place search type the place where your ancestor came from including parish and county. Click Search.</li> <li>4. Click Church Records.</li> <li>5. Scroll through and look for the nonconformist churches.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sign into your account.</li> <li>2. Click Search.</li> <li>3. Scroll down and under Births, Marriages, &amp; Deaths click the drop-down arrow and select, 'BMD Registers.' Included are the nonconformist registers.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to Wiki.FamilySearch.org.</li> <li>2. In the search box type, 'Record Offices in Wales.'</li> <li>3. Click on the county where your ancestors lived.</li> </ol> <p>Or use the Internet and type in the local chapel in Wales to find their contact information.</p> |

## For Additional Information

To learn more about Wales nonconformists, visit the FamilySearch Wiki at [wiki.familysearch.org](http://wiki.familysearch.org) and in the search box type, Wales Church Records.' Scroll down to the Nonconformist section.

There are also great resources available for learning more about Wales nonconformity and what church records exist.

- Rawlins, Bert J. *The Parish Churches and Nonconformist Chapels of Wales: Their Records and Where to Find Them*. Vol. 1. Salt Lake City, Utah: Celtic Heritage Publishing, 1987. (Family History Library [book 942.9 K2rp.](#)) This is a complete guide to parish church records and nonconformist chapels up to 1851 (later for some sects). It covers the counties of Cardigan, Carmarthen, and Pembroke.
- Williams, C. J., and J. Watts-Williams, comp. *Cofrestri Plwyf Cymru (Parish Registers of Wales)*. Aberystwyth, Wales: National Library of Wales, 1986. (Family History Library [book 942 V26ste](#) v. 13.) This book lists all Welsh parish registers, providing the beginning and the ending dates of the registers, locations, and other details about them.
- Ifans, Dafydd, ed. *Cofrestri Anghydffurfiol Cymru (Nonconformist Registers of Wales)*. Aberystwith, Wales: National Library of Wales and Welsh County Archivists' Group, 1994. (Family History Library [book 942.9 K23c.](#))